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A

TREATISE, &c.

BRITISH MUSEUM

A TREATISE ON THE CUSTOM OF COUNTING NOSES.

LONDON.
Printed for G. KEARSLY, in Fleet-Street.
M,DCC,LXXIX.
(Price ONE SHILLING)

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PREFACE

AND

DEDICATION.

IT is remarked by Monſieur Rouſſeau that 'Tout honnête homme doit avouer les livres qu'il publie.' To which in the preſent inſtance I anſwer 'Je n'oſe pas,' not that I am afraid of their Lordſhips commiting me to New Priſon, in caſe that I avowed myſelf, for we all know that I ſhould then be rather under their protection: but that I ſhould not much like (as I have no chance of living long) to be delivered after execution with my name at full length to the company of paſtry-cooks for diſſection, nor to be thus torn to

pieces in any great man's cloſet, and forced to give him a ſecond wipe, after having with ſo much reluctance given him the firſt.

It is certainly a very miſtaken idea to ſend a man's works into the world with a modern preface; for whether you flatter or excuſe yourſelf (which is pretty much the ſame thing) you are ſure to do your book no good by it. The anticipation in both caſes is diſguſting, and comes from the wrong quarter---Beauties ſhould not be pointed out, and defects ſhould be moſt carefully concealed---Leave to the reader but room enough to become a commentator, and ten to one he is riddled into a ſecond and a third edition.

I dedicate the following ſheets to the right honorable the Lord Mayor of London *for the time being*; think-

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ing it but fair and equitable, that during the ſhort period of his enoblement he ſhould be greeted with a ſalutation from the literary world. If peradventure his lordſhip preſerves neither *weight* nor *meaſure* but in the place from whence he came, I wiſh him a ſafe return, and am heartily ſorry that my Dedication is ſo much abuſed. But, alas! under whoſe protection ſhall an author place his labours? Our permanent nobility are reduced to ſuch a ſtate of poverty, that even their reputations are in pawn. Go to Newmarket, and there, perhaps, you'll ſee one of them (and in the firſt rank too) politely giving up his ſeat to an intoxicated friend, and loading him with bets as he ſits down. Stay in town, and you will probably ſee, in the firſt ſtreet you walk through, another of them ſtepping out of a hackney

ney coach into a ſpunging-houſe, to relieve a brother ſwindler.

When the bright pillars of the ſtate, which ſtood,
And once upheld the dome of public good
In lofty pride—no more are ſeen to bear
Their honour'd burthen with a ſteady care;
But, nodding with infirmities, betray
The deadly ſymptoms of a deep decay;
Rotten and gone within, they cannot ſtand,
However gilded by the artiſt's hand;
That hand, whoſe curious poliſh can diſpenſe,
In ſpite of virtue, and in ſpite of ſenſe,
Such ſtrong deception, that before our eyes
The biſhop's holy, and the fool is wiſe;
The dwindling peer, in ſize not half his ſire,
Ribbon'd to-day, to-night's two inches higher:
O magic pow'r! that can at thy command,
Thus hold the gifts of nature in thy hand;
And yet ſo free be found from thirſt of pelf,
As never to beſtow upon thyſelf;
Diſtribute on—and in thy genuine mirth
Make of thy realm, a drawing-room on earth.

A TREATISE

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TREATISE, &c.

THERE cannot be any ſubject of more curious enquiry, nor demanding a more eager inveſtigation, than that of an eſtabliſhed and prevailing cuſtom: becauſe, formed as it is, in the contrary opinions, and differing caprices of mankind, it is, as it were, the refined eſſence, or collective point, in which is, at length contained, a principle of real univerſal agreement.

It may ſeem to thoſe, who thro' temper or inexperience, pay too great a ſhare of indulgence to human nature, or who, from a miſtake in ethics, are afraid to allow, that vice performs her revolution in the ſyſtem of the mind; that theſe cuſtoms, founded on ſuch a uniform concurrence, muſt bear the ſtamp of juſtneſs, and be the criterion of what is right; and the rule would be incontrovertibly true, if we only met together upon points of moral rectitude: but ſo long as indirect ways will lead men to their views, and what is good ſhall be no bar to proſecuting what is otherwiſe, it will by no means hold: and the only deduction that can be fairly made, is, that principles of this univerſal prevalence,

valence, muſt be conducive to the intereſts *generally*, of mankind, and conſequently be founded in the ſtability of wiſdom, though perhaps not reared in the beauteous ſymetry of virtue.

As the intention of the preſent enquiry is to ſearch into the ſubtil deſigns of human nature, it would not be treating the ſubject with that fairneſs which can alone lead me to the truth, were I either to cull according to my own fancy, or through an apprehenſion of encountering the ridicule of others, withhold exhibiting examples which may appear trivial from wanting a ſuperficial dignity: but it is to be obſerved, that eſtabliſhments in ſociety, which bear

the ſanction of authority, command an obedience, and therefore carrying along with them a compulſive power, prevent their obſervance from being the reſult of a free agency, from which alone we are to collect the genuine impulſe of the mind: they are *forced* into vigour by an artificial power, the merits of which it is not now my buſineſs to enquire into; whereas cuſtoms ripen into perfection, through a milder influence; they are of a ſlow and gradual growth; and in every ſtage of their progreſs are more and more qualified and adapted to the wiſhes of mens minds, until at length receiving the ſtamp of univerſal approbation, they may be eſteemed with us as the comb is in the vegetable world; to contain

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the pureſt extract, becauſe individually and immediately collected.

It would anſwer no purpoſe, to gather inſtances from other countries, which might be objected to, becauſe unknown---a familiar and obvious one, prevailing amongſt ourſelves, is the beſt adapted to enforce conviction. And as human nature is the ſame throughout, we may by this ſtandard meaſure to any extent we pleaſe.

The Cuſtom of counting Noſes, which I have made choice of to analize in this little Treatiſe, does, I truſt, appear to the ſagacious reader a ſubject of the greateſt import; being no leſs than that upon which every movement of the ſtate de-

depends:

pends: during this naſal ceremony, reaſon and argument attend in ſuſpence, and are often diſmiſſed without a power of appeal.--Life, liberty, and property, is *here* under a moſt abſolute controul: is it not then incumbent on us to enquire into the nature of that upon which every thing ſo dear to us depends?

I ſhall examine into the cauſes and effects of this cuſtom; that is, the reaſons upon which it has moſt probably been founded: with the conſequences that have therefrom reſulted to ſociety: and if in the courſe of this inveſtigation, it ſhall be proved to have anſwered to the ends of its inſtitution, I may, without making any parade, be allowed to

to ſay that it is conducive to the intereſts, *generally*, of mankind, and of courſe founded in the ſtability of wiſdom; which is the point to be eſtabliſhed.---I beg leave, though, to make this public declaration in the outſet of the buſineſs; that if I ſhall unfortunately make free with any man's noſe, in the proſecution of this work, or take a greater liberty with one man's than another's, it is not from any want of a due reſpect and deference to the proprietors, who are not only protected in this particular by the laws of politeneſs, but as hereafter will be ſhewn, by the expreſs proviſion of the legiſlature.

When men firſt came together in ſociety, and of courſe required rules

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and regulations, to preſerve them ſo, it became immediately eſtabliſhed, 'That the will of the greater number ſhould be eſteemed the will of the whole,'---an allowance founded upon this obvious reaſon, 'That as the majority was the ſtrongeſt ſide, the other might as well peaceably ſubmit.' The next neceſſary meaſure then, was to find out ſome mode, by which this *will* ſhould be made known and aſcertained.---The body, which is the dial of the mind, was had recourſe to---every part of it has been put to trial, until at length, for many wiſe and potent reaſons, the *noſe* hath been decreed, by tacit approbation, to be *the moſt convenient indicating member*. That it does anſwer the purpoſe, merely, will, I preſume

ſume, be eaſily granted; for every man is, prima facie, in the poſſeſſion of a noſe, more or leſs; beſides the *fact*, which ſtares us in the face, puts at once the matter out of doubt. But whether the purpoſe is thus *beſt* anſwered, or why this feature ſhould have ſtood the teſt, in preference to every other part of the human frame, is the queſtion, that weighs down the well-fledged eyebrow with conſiderance. To ſolve this point we muſt ſearch into the ſcience of the ſoul, and ſee if a matter, which ſeems to flow with ſuch an eaſy outward indifference, does not in fact take its riſe at ſome ſecret ſprings, of difficult acceſs and diſcovery. The policy of the cuſtom, which will be the moſt curious branch of the en-

quiry, we ſhall for a few moments poſtpone, in order to get clear of a ſubordinate one, namely *its conveniency*, which need not, I truſt, be much laboured with the learned reader. To prevent the repetition of ſimilar circumſtances, which are inſeperable from all aſſemblies, let us, for the ſake of brevity, only take under our conſideration the two houſes of Parliament. They are the moſt conſiderable, and as *omne majus continet in ſe minus*, we may, from the properties of theſe, form our judgment of the reſt.

In the firſt place, then, the noſe was, before this inſtitution, (allowing me to ſpeak in metaphor) the moſt idle member of ſociety; and therefore certainly now the moſt proper to be em-

employed. It partook of the ſmalleſt ſhare in performing the functions of the human frame. Its peculiar ſenſe is, comparatively ſpeaking, trifling, and that too is frequently deſtroyed, by the almoſt continual colds which we labour under in this climate.

Again: it is, in ſome caſes, from the habiliments of office, and a peculiarity of ſhape, in fact, the only point of the man that can be got at. For example, my Lord Bathurſt, when a little while ago Lord Chancellor, could not, I contend for it, be *told*, upon a ſtate-day, by any other evidence in nature. A meager Biſhop, in his lawn, (though I confeſs it would be a very new appearance) comes within the ſame caſe; as do

Judges Peers, gentlemen of the Bar in the houſe of Commons, and the Speaker in general. The preſent one happening to have ſo *much forehead*, does not overturn the rule, for *exceptio probat regulam*, cum multis aliis; ſo that, but for *this*, in ſome of the inſtances I have given, as that of my Lords the Biſhops, (whoſe taciturnity is not, from long and immemorial uſage, now a matter of remark) an enterpriſing Miniſter might, like *Bayes*, foiſt in a bench of buckram upon any urgent occaſion, and thus carry a queſtion againſt the moſt leading principle of the conſtitution.

With reſpect to the policy of the cuſtom now under conſideration; men have been always careful, that if they cannot aſſume the ſemblance of

of virtue in the commiſſion of a bad action, they may at leaſt avoid, betraying any ſigns of vice. To this end hypocriſy has been made a ſcience; for ſo long as men appear compoſed *without*, there is leſs reaſon to ſuſpect that, there is any thing diſturbed *within*. Conſcience however, placed in the breaſt of man, as the advocate of truth, was found to be an overmatch for the buſy agents of her enemies. Falſhood was accompanied by this diſprover, whereſovever ſhe went; the tongue faultered, when its office was perverted; the lips trembled, when they gave an unjuſt utterance; the hand ſhook when it threw in the ſuffrage that had been baſely bartered for and ſold; in ſhort, men under

theſe

theſe diſquiet circumſtances, began further to conſult their eaſe, and ſearch for other modes by which they might accompliſh their deſigns without expoſure. For putting a ſenſe of ſhame out of the queſtion, the moſt hardened of us all have a pride not to be detected. I do not mean this obſervation, as extending to the veterans, in propria peſona, who are too impenetrable to be ſtruck with feeling themſelves: but in order to ſhew, the fatherly regard, they have always had to youth, who, when enliſted, they take care ſhall not impede the ſervice, by being brought into any aukward or embarraſſed ſituation. The noſe, then, very naturally occurred, as being a uniform, ſteady friend, that might with ſafety be de-

depended

pended on; not ſubject to be thrown into emotion, from the calls of conſcience, nor of courſe to be eaſily put out of countenance. How happy is it for the preſent Adminiſtration that its neighbouring feature is diſpenſed with! ſince elſe, our worthy Premier would be put to the inconvenience, now and then, of opening his eyes at the cloſe of a debate ---too great a trouble for ſo great a man! who now, thank Heaven! like Mr. Droz, can ſet his unerring autometons in motion, and confident in the mechaniſm, have no anxiety for the performance.

Again: had it been the *cuſtom* to *tell* the members by the eye, the ear, the mouth, or the leg; in theſe caſes, a flagrant injuſtice muſt have been

been the conſequence: for the lame, the blind, the deaf, and the dumb, would have been moſt unjuſtifiably excluded from a ſhare in the management of ſtate-affairs. It will not, I hope, be objected here, by any nibbling critic, 'that the mouth *is* the organ through which the vote is given;' for in reality, and I dare to ſay his Majeſty's miniſters will agree with me) it has quite the contrary tendency, and only ſerves to delay deciſion by its noiſe and perturbation. But to return: were thoſe who labour under the afflictions I have mentioned, to be thereby diſqualified for ſituations they were in other reſpects entitled to, the public harmony muſt be immediately converted into diſcord and diſpute: the man of landed property, inſtead of

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appearing on the huſtings, with his friends and freeholders about him, would be ſeen brought up to the tribunal of the Sheriff, attended by the brethren of the faculty, to inſpect his imperfections; and afterwards (if he had been happy enough to have obtained a verdict in his favour) giving in, together with the return of the writ, the teſtimonial of his being ſound. The Peer of the realm, whoſe hereditary right to ſitting in Parliament, is interwoven with the very form of the conſtitution, would *here* ſee his rooted privileges torn up at once: beſides, how greatly would it have derogated from the dignity of their Lordſhips, to have beheld *Black-Rod* putting aſide the wig of a Lord Chancellor, or pulling up the petticoats of an Arch-

Biſhop, to examine into the reſponſibility of his parts.

We come now to treat of the effects of this cuſtom, or the conſequences that have reſulted from it to ſociety.

Perfection is not to be obtained in any human inſtitution. If its advantages preponderate, it is as much as can be expected: indeed thoſe of the rule we are at preſent diſcuſſing, are weighty in the ſcale; and the only inconvenience to be taken notice of, (and which by the way has been ſince remedied by act of Parliament,) is not to be attributed as eſſential to the cuſtom, but as a collateral circumſtance ariſing from the greateſt merit of it. The purpoſes

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of collecting ſuffrages, was *here* found to be ſo admirably anſwered, that, like all other patterns of excellence, it ſoon created jealouſy and hatred; inſomuch, that in the reigns of the Stewarts, (when party too ran very high) the noſe of any man, who had been active in either houſe of legiſlature, was in conſtant jeopardy and danger. However, this alarming evil was at length put a ſtop to (I ſhall quote the words of Blackſtone) "by the 22d and 23d Car. II. c. 1. called the Coventry Act, being occaſioned by an aſſault on Sir John Coventry in the ſtreet, and *ſlitting his noſe*, in revenge for ſome obnoxious words uttered by him in Parliament: by this ſtatute the benefit of clergy is taken away from the prin-

cipal, his counſellers, aiders, and abettors."

Since this æra, every thing has been carried on with an eaſe and tranquility unknown to former times. Members of parliament, relieved from the tedious trouble of attending to the merits of a queſtion, have leiſure now to mind their various occupations; and provided they juſt ſhew their noſes in the *houſe* at the time it is going to divide, every purpoſe is anſwered, for the encreaſe of bloodſhed and taxation: two points that have been wiſely kept going together by our incomparable Miniſter, whoſe experience in finance enables him to know, that the poorer a nation

tion grows, the leſs number of inhabitants it is able to ſuſtain.

Though the effects of this cuſtom have been chiefly felt in the repreſentative aſſemblies, yet, pregnant with advantages, it has ſpread its offspring far and wide. The peace of Paris, which ſo glorioufly terminated our exploits in the laſt war, was concluded by a man, whoſe noſe, and knowledge in negociation, will render him famous ſo long as records can remain.

I find, upon recollection, that I was too haſty in advertiſing the reader, that the 22d and 23d of Car. II. put a ſtop to the evil then prevailing: it went to the immediate occaſion

caſion of its birth ; but as penals acts are conſtrued *ſtrictly*, it protected the noſe only from injury, but not from inſult. Beſides, all prohibitory, or reſtraining acts, made in general terms, do impliedly except and ſave the right of the prerogative, which cannot be invaded, unleſs by ſpecial and particular words : hence then, when any man appears at St. James's whoſe parliamentary conduct may happen to have given umbrage, he is generally ſaluted by that well-known ceremony, called in the Court phraſe, '*rumping*' ; which is plainly of *naſal* origin, being as much as to ſay, "*your noſe in my* ----". But hold my pen ! and oh ! you maids of honor ! pardon an unhallowed wretch, who has dared to approach your

your tabernacle with ſuch profanneſs in his hand! Long and unmoleſted may you continue to enjoy your daily bread, and eke your corners in your daily coach----And when at length your virgin bloom ſhall have ripened to maturity, and Heaven have put you in poſſeſſion of the men you love, may the bounty of your miſtreſs be expended in the adornment of your perſons! and profiting in the abundancy of her example, may you bleſs your country in a fair and numerous progeny!

How ſilly is the author who ventures on an apoſtrophe in the middle of his work. It is going out of the road in which his ſober journey lies, to enjoy a beauteous proſpect: there

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is no returning with delight, and yet no ſtaying without breach of faith. Adieu then, Pegaſus, and all ye ſightly courſers of the air! I muſt again get on my ſorry jade, and on terreſtrial ground reſume my former pace. Yet, ere I diſmount, let me have one good gallop more; and then, you jockeys of the ſtate, farewell! both high and low,---nurſe Talbot---Gold Stick---all farewell! And thou! for whoſe ineffable delight, the colours of the Eaſt have home been waſted, O! may thy curious eye be ſated in the ſurvey--- And when the returning ſeaſon ſhall thy camps reſtore, O may'ſt thou then reanimate the tented field! and mounted on a barbed ſteed, again ſtrike terror in thy fearful adverſaries!

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Nothing but the point of honor, and the neceſſity of making up a ſhilling's worth, (that is in bulk, for your Ladyſhips know that it is the ſize of the thing which firſt recommends it) could make me now reſume my hiſtory.---O there is a pleaſure in dreſſing up great men in buſkins, and marching them along the highway, that few are aware of! I beg of your Worſhips, not to attribute it to any ſubacid humour of envy, floating in us little people, whom you ſpatter and ſplaſh every day, as you drive by. If that was the caſe, inſtead of ſetting you off to the greateſt advantage in your beſt things, we ſhould take off your Honours wigs, and ſhew your cropt ears, and ſtrip you of your gowns

and garments, and expoſe the rags you firſt ſet out a begging in. No. The pleaſure I ſpeak of is to be accounted for elſewhere. Turn over the pages of humanity, and there perhaps you'll find it, if, peradventure, you be not a ſtranger to the text; or, when you take off your night-caps in the morning, look into the glaſs, and there behold the ſores and ſhames that are broken out upon your bare heads. Do this, and then acknowledge that it is charity to cover you, and conceal thoſe damning proofs that corruption has thrown out upon the ſurface.

But to return.---On recurring to *where* I left off, I find *my noſe* has been all this while in very *comfort-*

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able quarters; and *foul* befal that man who ſhould wiſh to get into his place! It is with reluctance I muſt now diſturb him, to attend me in the remainder of my journey. My honor is in pledge; until redeemed, her ſeat muſt be left empty.

As I truſt I have already anſwered the end of conviction, there remains little more incumbent on me, as an author: however, a few deſultory remarks may be found neceſſary, on ſome terms and circumſtances, that may not be perfectly well underſtood. The circumſtance, for inſtance, of having ruined our American trade, for which our Miniſters have been ſo violently torn to pieces by thoſe who knew nothing about the matter, is,

when properly conſidered, a meaſure upon which the eaſe of government, and the tranquility of the nation, in a great degree depended. The encreaſed importation of tobacco was beginning, when this war was ſo critically undertaken, to have the moſt alarming effects; for the noſe was found to receive ſuch an extreme degree of irritability, from the immoderate uſe of ſnuff, as to render it leſs and leſs manageable every day. The ferment had almoſt pervaded the whole body politic; inſomuch that we were abſolutely reduced to the alternative of either ſeeing the firſt and beſt men in the kingdom ſneezed upon, and ſnuffed at with impunity, or elſe to lay the axe at once to the root of the diſeaſe, and by removing

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(at leaſt to a great degree) the cauſe, prevent the effect from gaining ground. The event has juſtified the meaſure; Wilkes, Junius, and the whole train of firebrands, who before had ſet the many-headed monſter in an uproar, have now laid by their ineffectual weapons; and the people can again apply the *noſe* to its moſt natural function, *and ſnore away their time*, as if their repoſe had never been invaded:

I am happy, in this place, to have done ample juſtice to Adminiſtration, in having laid the motive of their conduct before the public eye. Things moſt obvious in themſelves, are thoſe which in this country of metaphyſical politicians, are the leaſt

leaſt taken notice of: it is no wonder, then, that we, who pride ourſelves in myſtery and deep reſearch, ſhould have long ago paſſed by what we deemed too trivial to attract regard. The fact is (as I have fully explained) that we have been fighting for a *loſs*, and not an *acquiſition*. Can any thing, then, have been more compleat than our ſucceſs? And will not the great body of thinking men, who have hitherto been at their wits end to find out one poſſible ground, or idea, upon which the American war *could* have been undertaken, now turn aſide from the errors they have trodden in, and acknowledge, with that candor which becomes them, the ſuperior inſight of their betters?

Before

Before I conclude, let me recommend a better care of their noſes to our *riſing generation*. Men in the military line, who have loſt their legs or arms in the ſervice of their country, may, perchance, through ſingular luck, and much intereſt, be able to get as much as will maintain them in wooden legs and ſlings for the remainder of their lives; but in the civil line, the *noſe* is the ſine qua non of preferment; the loſs of it is fatal to the owner. It is the inſtrument of negociation---the political broker; hence Government is frequently ſaid "*to pay thro' the noſe for ſuch a thing*." This being the medius terminus; that is, Madam, the go-between, as it were, or middle-agent,

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that brings together, and does the buſineſs for both parties.

I beg pardon of Doctor Johnſon, for having preſumed to explain the meaning of any term or phraſe in the Engliſh language. The Doctor does it with ſo much more eaſe and ſimplicity, as all thoſe know who have had the honor of purchaſing his Dictionary, that I am really aſhamed of even the ſmall treſpaſs I have been guilty of. I muſt here do him the juſtice to acknowledge, that it was the clearneſs in his definition * of the noſe, that firſt opened and

* The prominence on the face, which is the organ of ſcent, and the emunctory of the brain.

and gave a ſcope to my comprehenſion of the ſubject! ſo that the merit (if there be any) of this work, is to be attributed to him;---a ſmall ſod, proportionably ſpeaking; but altho' it cannot, perceptibly, encreaſe the *bulk* of the *mountain*, yet its verdure may add ſomewhat to its beauty.

The ſubject of this Treatiſe admits of many branches of enquiry; I have confined myſelf to *one*; the others are done ample juſtice to in the decads of Slawkenbergius, to which I muſt refer the reader, having a mortal averſion to quotations, and moreover, becauſe I have not the book at preſent with me. Therefore wiſhing him all health and happineſs; may he find more pleaſure

and inſtruction in the peruſal of that, than he could poſſibly have received in the reading over of this, and be found, ſo long as he lives, a faithful and ſincere friend, both to his country and acquaintance

F I N I S.